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ARNOLD (R.D.) *with the prospects of the author*

THE RECIPROCAL DUTY OF PHYSICIANS AND OF THE
PUBLIC TOWARDS EACH OTHER.

AN ADDRESS,
DELIVERED BEFORE THE
MEDICAL SOCIETY,
OF THE STATE OF GEORGIA,

AT ITS SECOND ANNUAL MEETING,

Held at Atlanta, on the 9th of April, 1851;

BY

RICHARD D. ARNOLD, A. M. M. D.,

President of the Medical Society, of the State of Georgia,
Member of the American Medical Association, &c.

Published by order of the Society,

SAVANNAH:

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THE MEDICAL ARTS OF THE ANTIQUARIAN AND THE
MODERN MEDICAL ARTS

A N A D D E R S

MEDICAL ARTS

IN THE STATE OF GEORGIA

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RICHARD D. ARNOLD, A. M. D.

Professor of the Medical Arts, at the University of Georgia

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ADDRESS.

The occasion which brings us together, Gentlemen of the Medical Society, of the State of Georgia, is one which I sincerely hope will hereafter be productive of benefit to our State as well as our Profession. A little over two year since, the Medical men of this State met together in Macon, in response to a call made upon them ; and after due deliberation, organized themselves into a State Medical Society.— Well do I recollect the feelings of pleasure with which I, for the first time, met with many of my professional Brethren, of my own State, who had been pursuing their laborious calling in spheres remote and distinct from my own, and I recognized this forming of new personal connections, and the linking together of old chains of friendship which time and distance had disjoined, as alone well worthy of producing and keeping up an Association like ours.

But pleasant and agreeable as such motives would be, far higher ones influenced our course.

In common with the practitioners of other States, we had watched with deep interest the action of the American Medical Association.

The earnest endeavor of that body from its inception in 1846, had been to elevate the standing of our profession to the height becoming a liberal one. Among the causes which have retarded its advancement in these United States, is the want of centralization, arising from our vast extent of country, our scattered population, and want of power in the General Government to pass any law requiring a uniform standard of Medical Education throughout the Union.

In our wide spread Union, where each State has the power of granting charters to Medical Colleges, to confer Medical Degrees, it was not supposed that any common head could be made for the profession throughout its borders.

That Association was called into existence by the almost universal conviction that the cause of Medical education was suffering throughout our whole country, and that the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Medicine, were far too few for the dignity of the profession and the safety of the public.

It was thought that public opinion might be concentrated by the assemblage of Physicians from various portions of our confederacy, and that their well digested and matured conclusions on this important subject might slowly, but surely effect some material improvements in relation to it.

This is not the time nor the place to examine the question of how much has already been effected by that Association. Where the appeal is solely to public opinion in so complicated a matter as Medical Reform, the results can never be as speedy as when the strong arm of the law cuts the Gordian Knot, and requires that certain things shall be done for the benefit of the commonwealth. But I do not assert too much when I say, that the objects held in view by that Association, and attempted to be gained by it, have met the hearty approbation of every right minded Physician in the United States.

You, gentlemen, have given a form and body to your approval.

At the meeting of the American Medical Association held in Baltimore, in May, 1848, a distinct and emphatic announcement of its views, was given in the following Resolution :

Whereas the objects of the American Medical Association cannot be effectually carried out without a more general and efficient co-operation of the profession throughout the United States. Be it therefore

Resolved, That it is earnestly recommended to the Physicians of those States in which State Medical Societies do not exist, that they take measures to organize them before the next meeting of the American Medical Association.

Your answer to this, gentlemen was given on the 20th of

March, 1849, by the organization of the Medical Society of the State of Georgia, in which capacity and in compliance with your flattering invitation twice extended to me, I now have the honour of addressing you.

When I take into consideration the vast number of introductory lectures and addresses which are almost monthly put forth on subjects connected with our profession, I might well shrink from the task of going over a field which has been so thoroughly gleaned that the stubble is hardly left on it.— And I assuredly would shrink from it, if it were my purpose to hash up to you the various compilations of the history of our science, which appear, from time to time ; if I intended “to skim off the cream of other men’s wits, pick the choice flowers of their tilled gardens to set out my (own) sterile plot.”

The objects of our Society are practical ones, and to some of these I will address myself.

They are clearly set forth in the 2nd article of its constitution to “be, the advancement of Medical Knowledge ; the elevation of professional character ; the protection of the interests of its members ; the extension of the bounds of Medical Science, and the promotion of all measures adapted to relieve suffering humanity and to protect the lives and improve the health of the community.”

Important ends these, to be attained, and well worthy of our most mature reflection as to how we are to attain them.

Before proceeding to point out how, in my opinion, we may attain some of these high objects—let us pause for a moment, and boldly but candidly define our position before the public, and show why we bespeak from them a respectful consideration of our efforts.

We have not come up hither influenced by those feelings of political aspiration, which more or less stimulate those who assemble together to designate who shall be the candidates for public favour, as the representatives of opposing factions of the State. We do not seek, by the concentration of any feeling or prejudice, to invoke the action of any one portion

of our citizens to promote any particular views ; we ask no peculiar favors.

Our objects, patent in the article of our constitution cited before, are such as ought to command the hearty sympathy and support of every reflecting man within the bounds of the State, for, if attained they must, and will be conducive to the public good.

I cannot find a better guarantee for the correctness of this position than is afforded me by looking around this assemblage. Here I see men from every section of our State, who have left their business, urgent as that of our profession always is, and have sacrificed for the time their own pecuniary advantage, to assist in carrying out the important work attempted by us in our associate capacity.

We have recognized and acknowledged that something more than isolated individual effort is necessary to do this.

A beautiful apologue has recently been going the rounds of the Newspapers, wherein the abuses of society in its various circles are shown, and in which many honest reformers in their respective spheres are represented as abashed by their want of success in their first endeavors to better matters, and they then cease from their labours, contenting themselves with saying, of those various institutions threatened with ruin, "They will last our time."

Most of us here, have little or no personal interest in whatever reforms we may conceive our noble profession to need. The positions of the majority of us are well defined in our respective circles, and most likely ere any of the plans which any or all of us might devise, could be carried into effect, we may have ceased to exist ; and we might now take refuge in the same phrase, and say of our profession, as it now is, "It will last our time."

Our profession is, however, I trust too much accustomed to self sacrifice to permit us to take shelter behind so ignominious a position, and I rely on the active co-operation of every member of this society, to carry out its views to the best of his ability.

When he shall have done this, he will have performed his duty before man and God.

In endeavoring to ascertain how this may be best done, I shall divide what I have to say into two general heads.

1st. The duty of the Physicians of Georgia to the Public.

2nd. The duty of the Public of Georgia to their Physicians.

The first and most important duty connected with a profession involving the immense responsibility that ours does, is that before entering upon its practice, we should have made a thorough preparation for it, as far as study goes.

In our profession, action must ever follow immediately upon judgment. No time is left for balancing opinions.—The safety, the lives of our patients depend upon decision in forming a judgment on our part. This can be done only when we have a full knowledge of the phenomena of health and disease, and this knowledge, if acquired solely by experience, would be acquired at an immense sacrifice of human life.

I know of no profession in which it is more indispensibly necessary that its principles should be thoroughly mastered before entering on its practice, than ours.

The Clergyman has the leisure of the closet for his preparation for his first sermon, the young sprig of the law who might feel himself embarrassed by his first case, may tell his client to call again, thereby securing to himself time to consult his authorities and save his reputation. But the young Physician has no such resource. His first case calls for the exercise of as much judgment, and promptitude of action as will the thousands which may follow. He then painfully realizes how much depends on him, and I will venture to say that there is not a Physician present who does not retain a vivid recollection of his first case, and the sudden opening as it were, of the responsibilities about to be devolved upon him. If at such a time, the conviction should arise in the practitioners mind that he has not been sufficiently fitted for his duty by education, it will be a source of regret and mortification to him, if he be a conscientious man.

Out of the great number who are every year licensed by our Medical Schools, there is a large proportion who abandon the profession as a practice. It is not too much to assume that very many do it from a conscientious conviction that their qualifications are not commensurate with the arduous duties they are called upon to perform, and that those who abandon the regular and honorable paths of the profession, and seek a livelihood in the "*athys*" and "*isms*" of the day, in opposition to the vast majority of physicians, and in disregard of time-tried experience, feel, from the same cause, convinced that there would be but little chance for them in honorable competition. When did quackery ever gain a recruit from amongst thoroughly educated physicians? It may indeed be asserted that more physicians fail from want of confidence in themselves, than for the public's want of confidence in them. Indeed, the instances which might be cited of the success of presumptuous ignorance when professing to cure disease, and of which the advertising columns of our newspapers daily afford examples, confirm this proposition. When the power to heal is boldly assumed, there is always a large proportion of the public which is willing to believe in the reality of that power.

The desire to be relieved from pain and suffering ever acts as an adjunct to the bold quack, and the fact that in sickness the mind is affected by the infirmities of the body, is another important cause of the pecuniary success of medical impostors. This ought to be a lesson to us: first, so to prepare ourselves in our profession that we should have confidence in ourselves; then the confidence of our patients will most certainly follow in its train.

And now let us candidly examine whether our duty is fully discharged in the manner in which individuals are invested with the honors of the doctorate, and are thus vouched for by the college granting the diploma, as having all the requirements necessary for its active duties.

In doing this I hope that I will not be misunderstood. I do not stand here to decry our profession as it is practised in

our country. I do not wish or mean to involve it as a class in the charges which I may bring against it as to dereliction in some of its duties. On the other hand I shall not enter into an indiscriminate laudation of it; nor shall I claim that each Physician is to be considered a 'Sir Oracle' the moment he receives his medical degree. My object is, Truth. To point out where I think the profession is derelict in its duty to the public, and how that dereliction can be atoned for and avoided in future.

Among those who a few years since started the project of a National Medical Association, there was great unanimity of opinion on one very important subject. Whatever diversity existed as to other points, such as what should be the length of terms of medical lectures, whether licensing and teaching should not be separated, and some other points, on this single subject, there was hardly a dissenting voice, viz: that as a general rule, the preliminary education of those received as students of medicine was of entirely too low a standard.

When we reflect that so liberal a profession as ours, summoning as it does to its aid so many collateral arts, and requiring a larger range of general information than any other, is to be built up by the student who commences its study, on the basis of whatever education he may have received up to that time, it is not unreasonable to say that it ought to be broad and comprehensive. That in this country it is not sufficiently so, is shown by the able report on this subject submitted to the National Medical Convention at Philadelphia in 1847. It proved that up to that time no standard of preliminary education was exacted in any single State in this Union; but that the whole matter was left to the decision of the Practitioner, who was asked to receive a pupil into his office. Now, either this is right or it is not; either a good preliminary education is essential to the proper study of the medical profession, or it is not. If the first position of the first proposition be assumed, then we might assert, that all that was necessary for a student about to commence his medical studies, was for him to know the letters of his horn-book,

or at most to know how to read his mother tongue. But how far would such a person go in such a study, before he would turn from it with disgust, for the very plain reason, that he could not possibly understand what he read. Now, while so extreme a case of ignorance seldom or never occurs, do not many commence their medical studies with an amount of education so limited that they are constantly embarrassed by not being able to understand the technical words with which an art so old as ours necessarily abounds, and which took their origin from the time when it was practised amongst a people whose language has become a dead one to us now? This brings me to a point, which I wish to illustrate more fully. I do not wish to see a standard set up which is unattainable by the mass of our active people. I do not require that a man should be versed in all arts and sciences before he undertakes that of medicine, but I will maintain, that at the very least, in addition to a thorough English education, he should be well versed in the Greek and Latin Languages.

In the first place, the discipline of the mind in a good preliminary education, is itself an excellent preparation for the more important study of a profession. Take two young men of equal minds and similar ages and let them commence the study of medicine; but let the one have received a thorough academic education, and let the other be taken from labor of any kind, with a knowledge of reading and writing alone; and can it be doubted which one would the sooner and the more thoroughly acquire a knowledge of his profession.—Such a proposition may be deemed self evident, and indeed it is; and it may be asked, why parade it here? I answer, because, however self evident it is, it has not yet been made the basis of a concerted action among the medical profession in our country; and the sooner it shall be done, the better it will be for the profession and for the public.

The knowledge of the dead languages, I mean Latin and Greek, is in my opinion indispensable to a correct and thorough appreciation and knowledge of medical science; because, without it, it is impossible to master the technology of

the profession. Terms which are used to express things pertaining to particular arts and sciences, and which cannot be expressed by ordinary language, are called technical.—Every occupation in life, in the various divisions of labor, has what may be called its technical terms, as the very etymology of the word proves.

The learned profession of the law is full of them, the Divine meets with them on the first page of Theology which he reads.

A Medical student needs them on the very threshold of his studies, whether he commence with *Materia Medica* or with *Anatomy*. The nomenclature of these two branches of our science is based on the Latin and the Greek, and it is less trouble to learn them in order to understand the former, than it would be to alter that nomenclature and bring it to a level with the comprehension of those who know only their mother tongue. Besides there is an advantage in the nomenclature such as it is, for it affords a common ground on which persons of various languages can meet. There was a time not more than three centuries ago, when Latin was the language common all over Europe, to those who were considered educated men. Although we of this age boast a great deal of our wonderful acquirements, that time no longer exists, and a contemplation of this fact might make us doubt our vast superiority over those who have preceded us.

The very first book with which a student is told to provide himself on entering a Medical office to pursue his studies, is a Medical Dictionary. So numerous are the technical terms of medicine that it requires a large volume to contain them and their definitions. On opening a volume of this kind we will find the very great majority of words defined in it to be derived from the Greek or the Latin. To one conversant with those languages, those derivations fix the meaning of the words very firmly, for it is another link in the chain of association. Should the meaning slip from his memory, an analysis of its etymology affords the key to its signification. To one ignorant of those languages, the words stand isolated, distinct and meaningless as those of a foreign language, and

can be mastered only by as strong an effort of the memory, and it will cost more time and trouble to learn them thoroughly than it would to learn enough of the rudiments of the dead languages to understand their derivations. Moreover, the unprepared student cannot form so just an estimate of the true signification of medical terms. Here is at once the source of many misapprehensions which can be corrected only by time and experience. They are to him mere words without ideas. The admirable advice of Locke in his conduct of the Human Understanding, is so forcibly brought to my mind in contemplating the bewilderment of a medical student in trying to form a correct judgment under such circumstances, that I cannot refrain from quoting it.

“I have,” says he in his section upon Words, “copiously enough spoken of the abuse of words in another place, therefore shall, upon this reflection, that the sciences are full of them, warn those that would conduct their understanding right, not to take any term howsoever authorized by the language of the schools, to stand for any thing until they have an idea of it. A word may be of frequent use and great credit with several authors, and be by them made use of as if it stood for some real being ; but yet, if he that reads cannot frame any distinct ideas of that, it is certain to him a mere empty sound without a meaning, and he learns no more by all that is said of it or attributed to it, than if it were affirmed only of that bare empty sound. They who would advance in knowledge and not deceive and swell themselves with a little articulated air, should lay down this as a fundamental rule, not to take words for things, nor suppose that names in books signify real entities in nature, until they can frame clear and distinct ideas of those entities.”

In this glance at the necessity of a knowledge of the dead languages as connected with the study of our profession, I have limited myself to a mere utilitarian view of the subject, leaving out of sight those higher incentives to a liberal education which ought to operate on all those who wish to enter

our ranks. If our profession be the high, noble and dignified one, I believe it to be, it is because in all ages and in all countries there have been found in its ranks men who have elevated it by the extent of their learning as well as the beneficence of their actions. It has always been looked up to as a profession requiring and combining more varied information than any other. There have arisen occasionally men, who in despite of the disadvantages of a scanty education have taken the highest rank in the Profession. But they have done this in spite of such disadvantages, and not on account of them. The example of John Hunter is frequently quoted by those who would wish to depreciate the advantages of a preliminary education.

On examining the circumstances attending the career of that great man, I am inclined to claim his example as one strengthening my own views of the importance of a good preliminary education, for the want of it, in him, in my opinion, retarded his progress in fortune and in fame, and it was only after a lapse of many years of the most assiduous toil in his dissecting room, that his merits became acknowledged; and yet some circumstances were well calculated to have enabled him at once to take the stand his high merits deserved. He was associated with his brother William Hunter, a man of classic attainments, a fine lecturer, a ready writer, a skilful anatomist, whose position was already defined when John Hunter went up to London. As long as they continued their researches together, the pen of the elder Brother was of very great assistance to the fame of both.

Education only developes mental qualities; it does not create them. If to the genius of John Hunter, the education of William Hunter had been added, who can doubt that a legitimate success would have the sooner crowned his efforts. As soon as he took the scalpel in hand, it was found that he had a peculiar aptitude for anatomical pursuits. Anatomy did indeed become his pathway to fame, for on it rest Physiology and Surgery, and with the three is the name of John Hunter, imperishably associated. We now survey his fame

as a whole, because time has consolidated and consecrated it; but when we examine the details of his career, we will find that it was developed more slowly in his lifetime than ought to have been the case from his unwearied industry and his transcendent talent, and this was owing solely to the deficiency of his early education.

His youth had been wild and desultory; he had neglected the opportunities offered him. Like many in a similar condition, he undervalued the importance of classic studies. After he had been three years in London, his brother William persuaded him to enter his name as a gentleman Commoner at Oxford, but he did not follow it up. His latest Biographer, Mr. Ottley, informs us that "in speaking of it some years afterwards to Sir Anthony Carlisle, then a student at the Hospital, Hunter said, 'they wanted to make an old woman of me, or that I should stuff Latin and Greek at the university of Oxford, but,' added he significantly pressing his thumb nail on the table, 'these schemes I cracked like so many vermin as they came before me.'"

His manners were extraordinarily rough, he expressed himself with great want of elegance, and even propriety, in his lectures; for from want of proper training, he really could not be properly delivered of his ideas. His Biographer tells us that in "speaking of a case of gunshot wound, he described the ball as having gone into the man's belly and hit his guts such a damned thump that they mortified." Will any one deny that such modes of expression must have cast ridicule on any man, unless such weak points had been counterbalanced by other extraordinary qualities. For years his class never amounted to twenty. It was not until after he had been in London twenty-three years, during which time he had devoted himself most assiduously to Anatomy and Surgery, that he gave Lectures exclusively on the latter branch. It would be well if some who hold with him that studying Latin and Greek "is making an old woman of ones self," would imitate him in his long course of study and practical devotion to the dissecting room and the bedside before their venturing to teach.

Perhaps there would not be so many Professors, as now adorn the Medical Profession in the United States.

No, Gentlemen, when the Almighty vouchsafes such a brain as Hunter's to any man, he may safely depreciate the advantages of a good education and despise the courtesies of life—but not until then.

It has been so much the custom in addresses of this kind for the orators to indulge in a lofty strain of panegyric on our noble Profession, bringing all its perfections into a broad light, and carefully keeping within the dark any thing which might mar the picture sketched by them, that many may deem me hypercritical, and one who looks for the glory of the profession in the past alone.

I do confess that I have a veneration for the past ; I look back through the long vista of ages, and I recognize with pride that more than two thousand years ago, Medicine was acknowledged as a distinct science, and had its Professors whose reputation was co-extensive with the bounds of what then constituted the civilized world. The History of our science teaches me, that we of the 19th century, are not the only Physicians who have been thoroughly skilled in our Art. I believe that wherever in our profession, we have had a careful, educated, judicious and sensible observer of the Phenomena of disease, there we have had a good Physician. But while I thus respect the past, I fully appreciate the present. No one feels prouder than I do of the progress which our Profession has made within the last half century. The application of auscultation to the diagnosis of disease is a great step forward in the practice of medicine ; the improvements in Surgery have been many and important, while the immense strides of chemistry, in addition to the light thrown by it on the laws and functions of vitality, have given us an advantage of remedies small in bulk but powerful in effects.

Let the Southern Physician contrast his small but efficient dose of Quinine with the bulky dose of powdered Peruvian Bark, which his predecessor was obliged to use to obtain the same effect, and he may suspect that his greater success in

the treatment of Climate Fever is as much owing to the Laboratory of the Chemist as to any peculiar and superior powers of his own.

If there be any cause that will make our Profession retrograde in this country, let us fearlessly point it out. Disease cannot be effectually combated until it has been properly diagnosed. If the Physician omit to notice an affection which is slowly involving some organ important to vitality, while he complacently dilates to his patient on certain flattering symptoms, he would commit a great error. I am afraid that those sanguine members of the Profession who see no fault to be corrected in its present state have committed an analogous error.

It is well known that the Army and Navy Boards of Examiners for Surgeons in their respective branches of service many years ago adopted a much higher standard of requirements for admission into their ranks than any Medical School in the country. Never mind with what Diploma the applicant was fortified, he was required to undergo an examination. What has been the consequence? Why, that as a Class, the Army and Navy Surgeons, of the United States are not surpassed by the Military and Naval Surgeons of any other country, and it is with pride and pleasure that I point to them as an honour to our Profession in the United States.

Now it is notorious to all young Medical aspirants, after a Surgeons appointment, that these examinations are very rigid, and it is but fair to suppose that none but the bolder and more thoroughly prepared portion of our annual Army of graduates in Medicine will submit themselves to this test. The records prove that out of the number who do apply only a small portion are passed. From the year 1841 to 1849, inclusive, out of 170 examined, only 55 were passed by the Army Medical Board. During the same period, out of 175 examined, only 77 were passed by the Navy Medical Board.

Let us appeal to the testimony of Dr. H. S. Heiskell, acting Surgeon General of the United States Army, as to the causes which prevent many candidates from being appointed

In his letter to Dr. Haxall of Richmond, Va., the able chairman of the Committee on Medical Education, appointed by the National Medical Convention, in 1846, to report at the succeeding Convention in 1847, Dr. Heiskell says: "The most striking causes of failure on the part of the candidates, is *insufficient* preparatory education, a hurried course of pupilage, want of proficiency in practical anatomy, in pathology and in clinical medicine." Among the applicants for admission into the Navy as surgeons, we find the same deficiency to exist. In the first volume of the Transactions of the American Medical Association, we find an interesting "statement in relation to the United States Naval Medical Corps," from Drs. Wm. Maxwell, Wood, and Ninnian Pinkney, Surgeons in the U. S. Navy.

These gentlemen say, "The aid of influential friends is not necessary, even to obtain permission to appear before the Boards; but it is granted to all within the prescribed ages disposed to enter the field of competition, without question as to political alliance or social position, but with the understanding that a limited number of appointments is to be made and those alone can be successful who are found to be best qualified."

That very many are deservedly rejected, no one will deny, after hearing the following testimony as to the qualifications of some of the candidates.

"Before a recent board," they say in another part of the statement, "one gentleman defined a lotion to be "a kind of application," and an evaporating lotion, one which does not evaporate. Another confessed his ignorance of the freezing and boiling points of water, and contended that knowledge on such points was useless. One candidate determined Castor Oil to be the "oil of Castor," an animal. Another located the solar plexus in the sole of the foot. All these were graduates."

Gentlemen of the Medical Society of the State of Georgia, is there not food for reflection in that last short sentence, "All these were graduates." Must there not be a fearful res-

possibility on those Medical Colleges who give the sanction of their diplomas to men so grossly ignorant as these answers convict those candidates of being ? They tell us in this boasting age that the schoolmaster is abroad. Let the Peripatetic Medical Professors, so abundant throughout our country, catch him before he goes home, for his services are much needed for some of their pupils.

It may be asked, how are we to remedy this ; we hold no authority, we are not even an incorporated society, we do not dispense Medical degrees, we cannot even license. I answer, Gentlemen, that in this matter we can do a great deal. It is through the office of the private practitioner that the vast majority of students make their first entrance into the Temple of Medical science. It is for us then to demand, to require that there should be some preliminary preparation for so important an event. If the applicant for Medical instruction be really deficient in a proper preliminary education, it should be candidly stated to him that he must make up that deficiency before entering on the study of a profession like ours. It should be proved to him that in this we seek his own good, and that it does not arise from any desire to discourage him in his pursuit of knowledge. He should be told that a narrow foundation cannot sustain a large superstructure, and that even with the best advantages of education our country can afford, an ingenuous youth will acknowledge, that very many difficulties beset him on his entrance into the vestibule of the temple.

Above all, try to convince him that it is in youth only that such acquirements can be gained, for it is then only that the mind, disengaged from the cares of active life and with all the impressibility of that age, can receive and retain those rudiments of knowledge which are essential for a basis of education, and that this time once lost can never be regained. Who has not experienced, as with advance of time, he has gradually become engrossed with the active duties of his Profession, how difficult it is to keep in the memory those lighter and more agreeable portions of education which are

properly classed amongst the amenities of Literature. But I shall not digress on this theme. My object is to confine myself to a utilitarian view of the matter, and I do no more than utter a solemn conviction when I say that it is our duty to the public to take no persons as pupils who have not, with other branches of a good academical education, at least a sufficient knowledge of Greek and Latin, to enable them to comprehend readily, the technology of Medicine.

In doing this we would confer a very great favour on the aspirant for Medical knowledge and would fulfil an important duty to the public

I am aware that this is a standard of preliminary education much below what is required in Europe, and I would lower it in this manner only because of the sparseness of our population, and the want of facilities for other than a plain academic education, compared with more densely settled countries ; but while I do this, I acknowledge this as a defect and will not seek to hide it by any boastful exaggeration of American capacity.

Before quitting this subject, let me briefly detail the amount of preparatory education required in the most enlightened countries of Europe. For the facts I am indebted to the able and interesting report of Dr. F. Cambell, Stewart of New York City, to the American Medical Association, made in 1849.

The University of Edinburg, which has essentially the same regulations as the other Schools of Great Britain, requires a competent knowledge, of Latin to be ascertained through direct examination by the Medical Faculty.

In Paris, when a young man first enters his name on the Bureau of the Faculty, he must exhibit his diploma as a bachelor of arts, or in lieu of that, submit to "an examination of one hour's duration on the French, Greek and Latin languages."

In the various Universities of Germany, (I mean Austria, Prussia, Hanover, Saxony, &c.,) "every candidate for admission into the medical department must undergo a satisfac-

tory preliminary examination on the subjects of Physics, Chemistry, Botany, Natural Sciences, the Classics, Mathematics, History and the rudiments of Philosophy, or else present certificates of acquirements in each of these branches from some recognized Academy or Universities. In Italy "Students must be eighteen years of age, produce certificates of acquirements in all the branches of elementary education, or undergo an examination on History, Latin and Greek, Composition, Mathematics, Botany, General Chemistry, Mineralogy and Geology, before they can be articulated."

In Switzerland, the regulations are much the same as in Germany and Italy.

The Medical Schools of Russia are modelled after those of Germany and "ample evidences of elementary education are invariably insisted upon as prerequisites to admission to the Medical classes."

Will any one deny that in those countries the Medical student begins the study of his profession under much greater advantages than in this country? If a preliminary education be considered of any importance, no one can deny it; and if any body will assert that it is of no importance, it would be as vain to argue with him, as if with one who believes the earth to be flat. As the matriculation of students into Medical studies, is most generally made amongst us, in the office of the private Physicians, it follows, gentlemen, that you in your individual capacities can exert a great and important influence in this matter, by following out the recommendations of the American Medical Association.

There is too great a disposition to commence the study of our profession while very young, and if the ardent youth who is anxious to penetrate its mysteries, should not be quite prepared in its preliminary studies, a year more devoted to their acquirement will be better spent than by poring over subjects which he cannot comprehend. It has come within my personal knowledge, that the Preceptor who has given such advice, has been warmly thanked by his pupil afterwards, and if as members of this Society, we should determine

to act upon the suggestion of the American Medical Association, I feel confident that our pupils would soon recognize the propriety of such a plan ; and when they in their turn, come to fill their places in the world, they will look back to us with gratitude, and thank us for having laid the corner stone in the great work of Medical reform ; and for having contributed to enlarge the usefulness and enhance the dignity of our noble art. Let us recollect the appropriate words of Gibbon, one whose learning has been surpassed by no modern scholar : “Genius may anticipate the season of maturity, but in the education of a people as in that of an individual, memory must be exercised before the powers of reason and fancy can be expanded ; nor may the artist hope to equal or surpass, till he has learned to imitate the works of his predecessors.”

The next most prominent duty which Physicians owe to the Public is, to use their best endeavors that no one should be allowed to practice Medicine unless some guarantee be afforded that the candidate for this privilege has gone through a certain class of studies calculated to fit him for it. I wish the public could open their understanding to this important subject, and learn that in this they are rather more concerned than the Members of the Profession. Many persons imagine that a high standard of acquirements for a medical degree, savours of a monopoly. Indeed in my political days I have heard such a sentiment advanced on the floor of the Legislature, and it was so highly approved of, that in the year 1839, when the Legislature passed a law re-organizing the Board of Physicians with power to examine candidates and grant Licenses, they wisely attached to it this proviso :

“Provided nothing in said revised act be so construed as to act against the Thompsonian or Botanic practice or any other practitioner in in this State.” This is very much like acting the play of Hamlet with the part of Hamlet left out.*

If the portals of our Profession were closed against all, but

* In 1847 a law was passed by our Legislature reviving the Bond and exempting only the Botanic or Thompsonian Practitioner..

a privileged few, this accusation might be made. But they are wide open for all comers of all conditions, and we wish only to keep up the equality, and insist that they should carry equal weights as near as can be. Do not people in every day life employ that mechanic who has served a regular apprenticeship in preference to him who has caught up his trade here and there, by snatches of time, and without regular instruction? Is it not then a strange anomaly to object to such a course of apprenticeship being served in a Profession whose ends and aims are certainly higher than that of any mere mechanical trade, seeing that the Physician operates upon living, organized, sentient material, and the Mechanic upon inorganic insensible masses.

The Medical Profession of the United States, not connected with any schools, through their only organ, the American Medical Association, have candidly acknowledged that the requirements for the degree of M. D., are not of a sufficiently elevated character in this country, and appealing solely to public opinion, for they have no other power, they have endeavored from the first organization of the National Medical Convention up to the present time to elevate the standard of such requirements. Dr. Haxall in his report quoted before, says on this subject: "When we consider the existing system of other countries, how vast a difference is manifested upon the most cursory examination, truly it must be acknowledged, that the mass of medical graduates is inferior to those of other climes, or that the talents of America, like its broad and impetuous rivers, or its majestic forests, can recognize no equality in others."

Which of these opinions the able Reporter entertained is no matter of doubt, when we peruse the following from the same report: "The Possession of the Diploma no longer tests the qualification of the man, and it cannot be doubted that the large number of Medical Colleges throughout the country and the facility with which the degree is obtained, have exerted a most pernicious influence." This report was adopted by an Association, presided over by the venerable

and illustrious Chapman assisted by such Vice Presidents as Knight of Connecticut, Stevens of New-York, Moultrie of S. Carolina and Buchanan of Tennessee, while on the floor participating in its deliberations, might have been seen such lights of our Science as Francis, Mott, S. Jackson, Wood, Meigs, Bell, and a host of others.

The first resolution offered and adopted with this report, recommended all Colleges to extend their courses of lectures to six months.

As no Medical College in the United States, requires attendance on more than two full courses, nor more than three years Professional study, this is surely not too much time, and when we contrast the requirements for a degree in this country with those in other countries, we have no reason to brag of our institutions.

By reference to Dr. Campbell Stewart's Report we learn that in Great Britain, four years study is required, the same in France, in Germany, Russia and Italy. When we examine the details of the manner in which this time is required to be appropriated, we perceive a much greater difference than is covered by the mere difference of time. No where in Europe are the lectures of so short duration as in the United States, and the greater portion of the time is required to be spent in the lecture room, the Hospital and the dissecting room. With us, two of the three years required are to be spent under the tuition of a private Practitioner. This proves gentlemen, that we have responsibilities resting on us in regard to Medical Education. If we require the Medical Schools to do their duty, we ought to be ready to do ours.

Much can be done by the judicious private preceptor to give a proper direction to the studies of his pupil. Indeed a course of training is absolutely necessary to enable the medical student to comprehend a lecture. If he has not had this training, he could not catch the meaning of the lectures, as a certain amount of elementary medical knowledge is always pre-supposed in the auditor, and while he is puzzling his head as to the meaning of some phrase, the winged words

have sped on, and he has entirely lost the thread of the discourse.

A great deal both practical and theoretical, can be learned in a private office by the attentive student. With the country Practitioner, who dispenses his medicines, he can acquire a practical knowledge of *materia Medica*, with the city Practitioner he can refer to the shelves of the Apothecary for the same purpose. With both, the minor operations of Surgery can be mastered by watching closely his Preceptor's practice. He can thoroughly acquire the technology of the science before going on the bench of the lecture room, and have so well studied its elements that he will be able at once to appreciate the demonstrative portions of the lectures. He can there be taught to go to the lectures, skilled in osteology, and enough of other divisions of Anatomy to comprehend the difference of the tissues of the human body ; and the situation of the various vital organs could be impressed on his mind even when his Preceptor is making an ordinary post mortem examination. With this knowledge and some acquaintance with the general laws of chemistry, he can have prepared himself tolerably well in the elements of Physiology. If such studies have been diligently pursued in the office of the Preceptor, the student will go off to the lecture room prepared to understand all that the lecturer may demonstrate or expound, and thus make a full use of his short course of lectures. I do not think sufficient importance has been attached to the responsibility of private tuition in Medicine. I acknowledge that the medical lecturer must have a hearer well informed as to the rudiments of the science. What would any uninitiated person understand of any medical lecture, on hearing one for the first time ? Yet if we do not require from our pupils care and attention when with us, how can we expect them to acquire knowledge enough to understand the lectures thoroughly ? A young man of retentive memory may *cram* enough to pass an examination for a degree ; but unless he has attended to every study in its proper order, he will often in after life, bitterly regret his inattention.

You see them before you, gentlemen, two important duties to be performed by you.

First, To receive no student, unless he be properly qualified by a good preliminary education. Second when you have received such a one, consider your duty to him as a very responsible one, and do all that his natural talent will allow you to do, to give him a thorough knowledge of the elements of the science. Having done this, you will have a third duty to perform, viz., use all your influence to make him enter that Medical College where the course of instruction is the most thorough and complete, having special reference to the practical study of Anatomy, which after all is the corner stone of medicine.

The mention of Anatomy naturally brings me to the second division of my discourse. The duties of the Public of Georgia towards their Physicians.

I do not stand here to press any extravagant claims of our Profession upon the Public, but I really think that there are many things in which the Public fail in their duties to us, and not the least is the difficulty thrown in the way of our acquiring and keeping up a practical knowledge of the Anatomy of the Human Body. I will not go into details, nor into lengthened argument on this subject. The Public require of us a thorough knowledge of Anatomy in various branches of our practice, and yet that Public makes any attempt on our part to possess ourselves of this knowledge within the limits of the State, a penal offence, punishable by imprisonment in the Penitentiary.

If in the practice of Surgery we commit any error of treatment, we are liable to be prosecuted for damages. Take the common accidents of fractures and dislocations. How can they be properly treated without an accurate knowledge of Anatomy; and yet what would it avail a Physician, in case of a prosecution for malpractice, to put in a plea, that by the Laws of the State it is penal to use the only means by which that knowledge can be obtained. Moreover, that very State appeals to us in cases involving life and death, to use our

knowledge of Anatomy, to decide upon cases of violent death where foul play has been suspected. Yes, in all cases of criminal jurisprudence a fearful responsibility is thrown upon us by the authority which debars us from acquiring the means of meeting it in a proper manner.

There is surely gross inconsistency in this. Nor is this law one of those rendered inoperative by public opinion, or rather I should say inoperative because so many are concerned in breaking it ; as is the law against Gambling or that against buying votes at elections. There is a prejudice against anatomical pursuits which is fostered and cherished by the more ignorant portion of the community, which effectually precludes any but the most secret violation of the law in question, whilst the gentleman, without fear of prosecution may boast of the money he has won at the Faro Bank ; and Politicians may chuckle with impunity over the sudden conversions of opinion which some of their constituents undergo on the presentation of certain unanswerable reasons.

Why should I mince this matter, why should I not say at once that it is absurd and unjust on the part of the Public to entertain the notions they do on this subject. It is absurd to require a certain knowledge from a particular class of men and then to throw every obstacle in the way of acquiring it ; it is unjust to condemn a man for not knowing that which they have virtually prevented him from learning. The consequence of all this falls on the Public, as well as on the profession.

As I stated before, Anatomy is the very corner stone of medical science. It is a popular error to think it essential only to one branch of medicine, viz, Surgery. It is as indispensably necessary to the mere Physician as to the Surgeon-Pathology could never have made a single advance without it, and without Pathology, what becomes of the correct diagnosis of internal disease.

We find that medicine as a science has degenerated whenever Anatomy has been neglected. In the middle ages a gross superstition prevailed, and practical Anatomy was looked

upon as a sacrilege. We know historically that the end of the world was considered as at hand at various periods of those ages. A belief in Demons stalking the earth was general. Hence in order to avoid their power after death, there was a general anxiety that bodies after death should be buried in churches as they being consecrated ground would be beyond the influence of Demons. This is the origin of that pernicious custom of burying in churches and church yards, which even in the midst of cities, prevailed for so many centuries in Europe, and to which the practical sense of this century is now for the first time putting a stop. Hence too the idea of sacrilege which seems always to be attached to any interference with a dead body. Far be it from me to lessen for one moment that melancholy and affectionate respect which ought to be entertained for lifeless humanity. Nor do I entertain the utopian idea that public prejudice could be overcome and every village be made a school of medicine. But a proper consideration of this matter would overcome the aversion to making post-mortem examinations in private practice. We all know that this can be done without shocking a single feeling of surviving friends, and we are all ready to testify to its vast importance to us, practically, in conforming or correcting our Diagnosis of disease. In the course of my experience, I have always found that it was much easier to obtain permission for such an examination from the better educated and more intelligent people, than from those who had not the same advantages. Hence I am not without hope, that conciliatory arguments on the great importance of such examinations, pointing out their practical value in the treatment of the living, showing that when properly conducted, no propriety is violated and no decency shocked, might create a revolution in public sentiment on this matter. I freely grant that the mastery of the details of Anatomy is to be gained only in the Schools and in the dissecting room. Anatomy is essentially demonstrative and it can be thoroughly taught only where there is an abundant material. Hence the advantage of those medical Schools which are placed in

large cities.* And those large cities which afford the greatest facilities in this matter, invariably take the lead in Medical Science. Paris is confessedly in the front rank of the Medical Schools of the world, and it is because her Hospitals are opened for clinical instruction, and because her dissecting rooms abound with material. In our Profession practice must be joined with theory. That constitutes Medicine an art to be exercised as well as a Science to be studied.

The fate of our Profession is a peculiar one. There is no calling which is so self denying as ours. The moment a man succeeds in practice, that moment he ceases to be his own master, and must obey the behests of his patients at all times and seasons. He cannot and does not, I am proud to say it and believe it, pause to ascertain whether pecuniary compensation is to follow services. Indeed in many cases he knows that it will not, for no class of men in the whole world do half so much gratuitously as Medical men do. But the business is done daily by hosts of Practitioners in our State and Union, because as a class they are actuated by motives far above pecuniary compensation. The highest reward of the Medical Practitioner must always spring from the conscientious discharge of his responsible duties and it is to the monitor within that he must appeal whenever he seeks the highest incentive to the practice of his art.

If this were not so, how discouraging would it be to see the wordly success with which impudence and pretention too often meet; how the heart would sicken to see one whose whole life had been devoted to master the secrets of his profession, earning scarcely more than a decent support, while some plausible Dr. Dulcamara gulls the public with an elixir which gives life to his purse. But he who can be turned

† Dr. H. F. Campbell, Demonstrator of Anatomy in the Medical College of the State of Georgia at Augusta, stated during the meeting of the Society, and after the delivery of the address, that there was always an abundant supply of Anatomical material at that School, sufficient to ensure two for a class, during every session.

aside from the path of duty by such considerations, has not within him the materials for the true physician.

In all ages, in all countries we find men of mark toiling for the guerdon of fame more than for the reward of wealth. The stimulus to support the true spirit must come from within and not from without, else had nothing great in arts, science, or letters ever have been achieved in this world.

If then it can be proved that the end and aim of our profession when properly pursued, are high and honourable, and if with our principles candidly set forth we band ourselves together to carry them into action, I do think it the duty of the intelligent portion of the community to extend towards us a generous confidence and by their support and approbation cheer us on in our course. We ask no peculiar privileges, we seek no private ends. We publicly proclaim that ours is a difficult profession to be properly acquired only by laborious study.

We know it is in vain to seek any Legislative aid to the ends thus proclaimed by us. Even when seeking an object interesting to the public alone and to us only as integral portions of it, our Legislature has treated us as a body with contempt. The important subject of the Registration of births, marriages and deaths, which is now occupying the attention of Statesmen in other States and in Europe, was specially brought before that body by your request in the year 1849. It was treated with disdain as a trick of the Doctors. I hope on this subject that every member of this Society will appeal from the Representative to the constituent, and that through our efforts we may yet see a law on this important subject engrafted on our Statute Book.

Gentlemen, let us not falter in our purpose, because we cannot do all we wish to do. Let us not depise the day of small things. Our Society already numbers over one hundred Members. Auxiliary Societies are already formed, and I trust more will yet be formed in the various counties of the State who will aid in our endeavours to elevate the standing of the Medical Profession within its limits.

The law gives the public no protection against impudence and ignorance in Medical pretenders. By the law of 1839, quoted before all "practitioners of medicine" of every kind, are put on the same level. But thank God, we can protect our own honour from being sullied by a contact with Quakery in any shape. Our Constitution excludes all irregular practioners from being Associated with us. We scorn and repudiate them, take what name they may. The person who takes advantage of the credulity of man when labouring under sickness, and meanly endeavours to turn it to his pecuniary profit, is unworthy of communion with honorable Physicians, and although he may like Horace's miser glut over the money in his chest, he must feel that the slow unmoving finger of scorn is pointed at him by the honest spirits of our profession.

Time warns me to conclude. I have confined myself to the consideration of subjects on which I thought it in our power to do some good by our action as members of this Society.

The theme I have chosen is one involving the character and standing of our profession. Let me claim your favourable consideration of it. So only can we maintain our proud position as members of a liberal profession. We must by our industry, honour and acquirements raise ourselves high above the quackeries of the day, we must so thoroughly prepare ourselves in our profession that we can look down on Empirics of all kinds with the calm contempt of conscious superiority.

If we do these things we will have performed our duty to the public. We can control ourselves, we cannot control the public.

"Tis not in mortals to command success,
They can do more, deserve it."



